Listing of Claims:

1. (previously presented) In a method for cutting at least one graphics area from a sheet of material bearing a combination of such graphics area(s) and a plurality of registration marks in predetermined positions with respect to the graphics area(s), such combination being in a predetermined approximate position and orientation with respect to a set of reference features of the sheet of material, the method including (a) placing the sheet of material on a sheet-receiving surface, (b) sensing precise positions of the marks with a main sensor, and (c) cutting the graphics area(s) from the sheet of material in response to such precise positions, the improvement comprising:

- automatically determining whether the reference features are in an expected coordinate region on the sheet-receiving surface;
- if the reference features of the sheet of material are not in the expected coordinate region, automatically determining the coordinate region of the reference features on the sheet-receiving surface;
- sensing metrics of the reference features to determine a position and orientation of the sheet of material; and
- inferring therefrom the approximate positions of the registration marks.

2. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein automatically determining the coordinate region of the reference features includes:

- enlarging a field of view of the main sensor;
- locating the reference features within the enlarged field of view; and
- shrinking the field of view of the main sensor such that the reference features are within the field of view of the main sensor.

3. (original) The method of claim 2 wherein enlarging and shrinking the field of view of the main sensor includes zooming a lens of the main sensor.

4. (original) The method of claim 2 wherein:

- the enlarging step includes increasing the distance between the main sensor and the sheet of material; and
- the shrinking step includes decreasing the distance between the main sensor and the sheet of material.

5. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein automatically determining the coordinate region of the reference features includes locating the reference features within a field of view of a secondary sensor.

6. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein automatically determining the coordinate region of the reference features includes sensing an edge of the sheet of material.

7. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein automatically determining the coordinate region of the reference features includes sensing an adjacent pair of edges of the sheet of material.

8. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein automatically determining the coordinate region of the reference features includes sensing a predefined graphics feature of the sheet of material.

9. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein automatically determining the coordinate region of the reference features includes sensing two predefined graphics features of the sheet of material.

10. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein automatically determining the coordinate region of the reference features includes:

- moving the main sensor in a predetermined pattern surrounding the expected coordinate region of the reference features; and
- stopping the movement of the main sensor when the reference features are within a field of view of the main sensor.

11. (original) The method of claim 10 wherein the moving step includes rotating the main sensor such that the field of view changes.

12. (previously presented) In a method for cutting at least one graphics area from a sheet of material bearing a combination of such graphics area(s) and a plurality of registration marks in predetermined positions with respect to the graphics area(s), such combination being in a predetermined approximate position and orientation with respect to a set of reference features of the sheet of material, the method including (a) placing the sheet of material on a sheet-receiving surface, (b) sensing precise positions of the marks with a main sensor, and (c) cutting the graphics area(s) from the sheet of material in response to such precise positions, the improvement comprising:

- automatically determining whether the reference features are in an expected coordinate region on the sheet-receiving surface;
- if the reference features of the sheet of material are not in the expected coordinate region, automatically determining the coordinate region of the reference features on the sheet-receiving surface;
- sensing metrics of the reference features to determine a position and orientation of the sheet of material; and
- inferring therefrom the approximate positions of the registration marks,

whereby cutting occurs precisely despite two-dimensional distortion of the sheet of material prior to cutting.

13. (previously presented) In a method for narrow-path-processing with respect to at least one graphics area on a sheet of material bearing a combination of such graphics area(s) and a plurality of registration marks in predetermined positions with respect to the graphics area(s), such combination being in a predetermined approximate position and orientation with respect to a set of reference features of the sheet of material, the method including (a) placing the sheet of material on a sheet-receiving surface, (b) sensing precise positions of the marks with a main sensor, and (c) narrow-path-processing with respect to the graphics area(s) in response to such precise positions, the improvement comprising:

- automatically determining whether the reference features are in an expected coordinate region on the sheet-receiving surface;
- if the reference features of the sheet of material are not in the expected coordinate region, automatically determining the coordinate region of the reference features on the sheet-receiving surface;
- sensing metrics of the reference features to determine a position and orientation of the sheet of material; and
- inferring therefrom the approximate positions of the registration marks.

14. (previously presented) In apparatus for cutting at least one graphics area from a sheet of material bearing a combination of such graphics area(s) and a plurality of registration marks in predetermined positions with respect to the graphics area(s), such combination being in a predetermined approximate position and orientation with respect to a set of reference features of the sheet of material, such apparatus including (a) a sheet-receiving surface, (b) a main sensor, (c) a cutter operatively connected to the sensor and adapted to move about the sheet-receiving surface to cut the graphics area(s) from the sheet of material in response to precise positions of the marks sensed by the main sensor, the improvement comprising: reference feature identifier means for automatically determining a coordinate region of the reference features if the reference features are not in an expected coordinate region on the sheet-receiving surface, and for sensing metrics of the reference features in order to infer the approximate positions of the registration marks when the coordinate region of the reference features is known.

15. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the reference feature identifier means includes:

- a zoom lens on the main sensor; and
- controller means for (a) enlarging a field of view of the main sensor by zooming the lens, (b) locating the reference features within the enlarged field of view, (c) repositioning the main sensor in response to the locating step, and (d) shrinking the field of view of the main sensor by zooming the lens such that the reference features are within the field of view of the main sensor.

16. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the reference feature identifier means includes:

- a main-sensor height adjustor; and
- controller means for (a) enlarging the field of view of the main sensor by increasing the distance of the main sensor from the sheet of material, (b) locating the reference features within the enlarged field of view, (c) repositioning the main sensor in response to the locating step, and (d) shrinking the field of view of the main sensor by decreasing the distance of the main sensor from the sheet of material such that the reference features are within the field of view of the main sensor.

17. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the reference feature identifier means includes:

- a secondary sensor with a field of view larger than the field of view of the main sensor; and
- controller means for (a) locating the reference features within a field of view of the secondary sensor, and (b) repositioning the main sensor in response to locating the reference features within the field of view of the secondary sensor such that the reference features are within the field of view of the main sensor.

18. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the reference feature identifier means includes controller means for (a) moving the main sensor in a predetermined pattern surrounding the expected coordinate region of the reference features, and (b) stopping the movement of the main sensor when the reference features are located within the field of view of the main sensor.

19. (new) The method of claim 1 further including overcoming distortion in the sheet of material by, in association with the cutting, adjusting for distortion of differing degrees in different directions on the sheet of material.

20. (new) The method of claim 12 wherein the two-dimensional distortion is of differing degrees in different directions on the sheet of material.

21. (new) The method of claim 13 further including overcoming distortion in the sheet of material by, in association with the narrow-path-processing, adjusting for distortion of differing degrees in different directions on the sheet of material.

22. (new) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the at least one graphics area is distorted by differing degrees in different directions on the sheet of material.